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ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to assist Catholic elementary school principals in planning for the orientation of new teachers. A general framework describes orientation in the context of staff development and new teacher orientation. It is suggested that, before school opens, workshops for the new, and then the total, faculty be given, focusing on topics such as school goals, the teacher role, and the school community. Ongoing orientation activities for the entire faculty can encourage expressions of need and the sharing of insights. Appendices provide a brief history of Catholic schools in the United States, an essay on preparing an inspirational talk, characteristics of Catholic school teachers, and suggested guidelines for teachers in Catholic schools and prayer forms. A list of 29 references about staff development and religious education is included. (FG)

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BEGINNINGS:

The Orientation of New Teachers

by

Katherine Egan, C.S.J.

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National Catholic Educational Association

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Foreword

Beginnings make a difference—yet they always coincide with the most hectic days of the school year.

So, NCEA's Department of Elementary Schools offers this simple but sound aid for planning effective orientation of the teachers who enter your Catholic school.

We express sincere appreciation to the author, Katherine Egan, C.S.J., Assistant Professor of Graduate Studies in Education and Community Services, St. Thomas College, St. Paul, Minnesota, as well as Regional Representative for the Supervision, Personnel, and Curriculum Section of NCEA. She has effectively meshed practical implementation with sound educational theory.

Special thanks are also due those who offered suggestions concerning the content and/or reviewed the manuscript: Dean William Salesses; Brother Terence McLaughlin, F.S.C.; the graduate students in the Non-Public Education Program at St. Thomas; members of the Executive Committee of the NCEA Department of Elementary Schools, especially Sr. Lucille Hass, O.S.F.; Mrs. Mary Piotrowski; Sr. Madonna Schmelzle, O.S.F.; Sr. Mary Peter Traviss, O.P.; Sr. Dorothy Wilson, S.C.N.; also Ms. Wendy Tavenner, Elementary Department Administrative Assistant.

Catholic education is steadily enriched by the generous sharing of resources among committed educators. *Beginnings: The Orientation of New Teachers* is yet another example.

Sr. Mary John Kearney, O.P.
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Introduction

Book boxes are stacked in unscuffed school corridors that smell of fresh paint. Colorful displays spell welcome to children who wistfully count off the last days of summer. The many signs of new beginnings are familiar to veteran teachers as they drop by to open their classrooms and catch up on each other's news and plans.

A school year's beginning has a very special meaning to teachers with new contracts; they look forward to the unknown with alternate feelings of high expectancy and nervous uncertainty. The principal who is aware that each new teacher must not be alone on the journey from the unknown to full participation in the school community plans an orientation process that begins as early as the interview and continues as one phase of ongoing staff development. The outcome of the orientation process will have far-reaching effects on the school's capability to achieve its goals.

This booklet is designed to assist Catholic elementary school principals in planning for the orientation of new teachers. It is intended especially for the principal who does not have diocesan educational services available. The presentation first describes orientation within the context of staff development. Viewed outside this context, orientation can become a grab-bag of disjointed activities, without clear direction and with little respect for the way adults learn and grow into a role. The major part of the booklet suggests what should happen during orientation, when it should happen, and how it should happen.

Although the basic purposes of orientation will be similar from school to school, the specifics of the what, when, and how will differ for each. With regard to the "how," the activities this booklet lists for each of the four phases of orientation are only a sample of numerous possibilities; they are suggested with the hope of generating ideas for activities particularly suitable for the new teachers in a local school. The booklet concludes with a planning model which, if followed, will ensure that the orientation of new teachers in a school will be based on an adequate needs assessment and have both a clear focus and appropriate activities.

Orientation—A Stage of Staff Development

When a teacher contract is signed, a dual commitment is made. What the teacher pledges is explicitly stated in the contract. Implicit is the principal's pledge to assist the teacher to continue to grow as a Christian person and an educator. The principal carries out this pledge within a program of staff development. Because orientation is one stage of that development process, the philosophy which undergirds staff development is the foundation also for thinking about and planning for new teacher orientation.

Philosophy of Staff Development

Staff development is based on the premise that all adults in the school community are involved in a process of life-long learning and, in a Catholic school, in a process of faith development. A staff development program is intended for all personnel – maintenance, clerical, food service, support staff, teachers, and the principal him/herself. It includes a multitude of activities designed to enhance personal growth, expand world views, sharpen work skills, and offer mutual suport in a faith community. The growth of adult members of the school not only prepares them to serve the students more effectively, but also models for the students the value and beauty of moving more deeply and skillfully into life itself.

Staff development in a Catholic school is marked by a deep and abiding respect for persons as unique and called to share God's own life. "I have written you in the palms of my hands." (Isaiah, 49:16) It is out of a mutual belief in God and in what God has made possible, and continues to make possible, in each person and in persons gathered together, that a staff can dream, share, question, and continue to grow as a community. It is into this community of faith and learning that children are welcomed. Within this Christian bondedness, they, too, contribute to the shaping of the school community through their learning, dreaming, sharing, and questioning. It is imperative that the staff of a Catholic school see themselves on the way as brother-sister pilgrims with their students (Groome, 1980:263). They, like the students, are called to continued learning and continued growth in the Christian life.

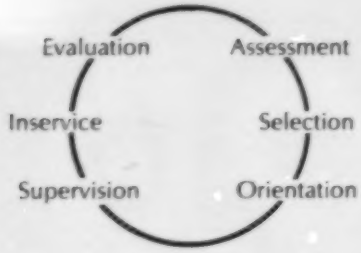
The growth of each staff member, and the staff as a whole, is a never-ending process that links the past, present, and future of the school and ensures quality education. Attentiveness to this developmental process is perhaps the most important function of a principal.

Such a philosophy of all-encompassing and ongoing development may seem idealistic to the over-busy principal. However, it is important to realize that planning for this development is not the principal's task alone, but rather is a task to be shared by all staff members. Staff members who cooperate in becoming educators for one another can create a development program that is dynamic, timely, and personally satisfying to them.[1] (The emphasis throughout this booklet that new teacher orientation be jointly planned by the principal and a faculty committee flows from this philosophy of cooperative endeavor.)

Stages of Staff Development

Staff development can be described as a cycle of six stages: assessment, selection, orientation, supervision, inservice, and evaluation. These stages apply to the growth of any person or group of persons performing a specific role in the school, i.e., clerical, janitorial.

Cycle of Development



The stages as specifically applicable to teachers are described below:

Assessment refers to the process of determining personal needs in light of the school's goals. It involves deciding what teacher positions are available, a description of what each position entails, and a description of the kind of person/professional to be recruited for each position.

Selection includes teacher recruitment, review of applications, interviews, and the choice of the most appropriate person.

Orientation is the induction and education process for new teachers which begins at the time of the interview and continues through a preschool, fall workshop, and ongoing phase until the new teacher no longer needs special services beyond the renewal programs of supervision and inservice in which all faculty participate.

Supervision is a systematic teacher-principal interaction designed to improve teacher effectiveness. It involves goal setting, classroom observation, and a teacher-principal conference to plan instructional improvement.

Inservice is a program of ongoing education and renewal for faculty, jointly planned by the principal and faculty.

Evaluation is an annual or periodic appraisal of individual teacher effectiveness and total faculty effectiveness. Evaluation results are used in assessing new needs.

These stages have been highlighted so that orientation can be seen in relationship to the other aspects of teacher development. There is a dynamic and fluid relationship between the stages. The activities of one stage overlap and flow into the activities of other stages. For example, the interview is one of the tools in the selection of teachers, and it also serves an important function of orientation. Moreover, the ongoing phase of orientation which occurs after the school year has begun involves special programs of supervision and inservice which blend into the supervision and inservice for the entire teaching staff. These relationships and distinctions will be described more fully in a later section on the phases of orientation.

The Content of New Teacher Orientation

Orientation implies a turning toward or a directing of one's attention and energies toward a certain goal. A principal's concern is that a new teacher turn his/her attention and energy toward becoming an integral part of a staff and a school. It can be assumed that the school's goals, values, and people have caught the attention of the new teacher during the interview and other encounters with the school community, or a contract would not have been signed. That attentiveness is held and guided during a well planned and carefully executed orientation program.

Two questions can be asked to determine what should be the content of new teacher orientation:

1. What should happen for the school?
2. What should happen for the teacher?

It is strongly recommended that the principal establish a small faculty committee to assist in answering these questions for their local school. The following discussion is offered as a stimulus to the local committee's thinking and planning.

What Should Happen for the School?

A school's mission statement, however clearly and beautifully stated, is only a dream unless it comes to life through people. Parents, administrators, and students are among those people; but it is the teachers who have the most power to make the dream a reality. They daily inspire and guide students. They have a profound effect on each child's self-concept. Teachers make the critical decisions about what is to be taught, when it is to be taught, and how it is to be taught. They link each child's life experiences with the world of all-that-could-be learned. The quality and effectiveness of teachers is directly related to the qualitiy and effectiveness of the school.

Therefore, what should happen for the school as a result of orientation is that the new teacher capture the vision of the school's mission and the spirit of its goals and objectives as they are spelled out in specific policies, programs, and practices. what should happen further is that the new teacher become increasingly effective as a teacher and as a team member with other staff in contributing to the school's mission. Lack of clarity about the goals of the school, uncertainty about job expectations, or a sense of being an outsider could block a new teacher's effectiveness. Orientation is designed to remove those blocks.[2]

What Should Happen for the Teacher?

An effective teacher has a sense of making a difference in a school. Commitment grows out of being an integral force in a group; new teachers gradually grow into commitment as they participate in the life of the school. To participate, a new teacher must first have an understanding of the school's goals and structures, the teaching position itself, and the school community. What should happen for the teacher during orientation is growth in knowledge, attitudes, and skills in the many aspects of those three major areas. Those aspects are listed below.

1. **School Goals and Structures**
   1.1 Philosophy, history of the school

1.2 Relationship to Church and to Church's educational goals
1.3 Policies, procedures, unwritten customs

2. The Teaching Position
2.1 Job expectations: total learning plan for all grade levels, curriculum for assigned grade level, teaching resources, relationship to authority and degree of autonomy in fulfilling role
2.2 Religious expectations: religious education, prayer, liturgy, social justice
2.3 Classroom management: discipline policies and procedures
2.4 Extracurricular assignments: expectations, policies, resources
2.5 Improvement of teaching skills: plan of supervision, inservice, evaluation, opportunities and requirements for personal/professional development
2.6 Personnel policies: conditions of employment, such as terms of salary payment, holidays, sick leave, medical insurance, pension plan, workmen's compensation, and other benefits; certification requirements

3. The Community
3.1 Information about socio-economics, cultural, and family background of students
3.2 Information about the locale – housing, if relocation is necessary; churches; services such as health, shopping, banking, and recreation; opportunities for involvement in the civic community
3.3 Opportunity to meet people of the school community – principal, pastor, teacher-sponsor, teachers, board members, parents, student, and consultants from diocesan education office
3.4 Opportunity to pray and socialize with people in the school community

The above categorization is an overview of areas to which attention may be given during the orientation process and can be adapted or expanded upon in each school. Such attention cannot be given all at once and will be spread over several month in a four-phase plan. Because of the nature of the learning process, some context will be introduced in one phase and handled in more depth in a later one. Some content will be addressed in every phase.

Phases in New Teacher Orientation

It has been mentioned earlier that new teacher orientation can be divided into four phases: interview phase, preschool phase, fall workshop phase, and ongoing phase. The activities of that final, ongoing phase gradually merge into the cycle of development for the entire faculty.

Although it is not possible to say exactly what should be the content and process of each phase, it is possible to assign some general tasks to each. Such assignment is made on the following pages in descriptions and charts of activities for each phase. It is highly recommended that the principal and a faculty planning committee engage in an assessment of their school needs and new teacher needs in order to decide precisely what should happen at each phase of their orientation program.

The Interview

The teacher orientation is often thought of as being a fall activity. However, it actually begins during the selection process. Not every teacher who applies and is interviewed will become a part of the school, but the ones who do will have been formed by those early experiences. First impressions – from reading school literature, interviewing with the principal and others, seeing students and teachers interacting in classrooms, and talking informally in the faculty room – can have a lasting impact.

The main purpose of the interview as part of the selection process is to determine whether the teacher's philosophy, knowledge, and skills match the requirements of the job opening. However, the interview is also a time of orienting the candidate to the school. What is accomplished in the interview can be built upon in later orientation activities for the candidate who is hired.

During the interview, the principal discusses the philosophy, history, and programs of the school as those relate to the specific teaching position. Dialogue about such matters gives the candidate adequate data to decide if it is to his/her self-interest to accept the position; it gives the principal insight into the candidate's qualifications. What the new teacher learns during the interview process can serve as a guide to a fuller understanding of and identification with the school.

What the principal learns during the interview can be used to tailor an orientation plan that will best fit the new teacher. Not every teacher new to the school will have the same needs. Some teachers will be entering their first teaching assignment. Some will have taught in public schools. Others will have taught in Catholic schools which are similar to or perhaps quite different from the Catholic school they are entering. Some will have a religious belief other than Catholic. It is important that an accurate assessment of needs be made, so that the preschool, fall workshop, and ongoing orientation activities will be sensitive to what could be the most helpful to each new teacher's adjustment.[3] The following chart describes more fully activities related only to the orientation aspect of the interview.

Preschool

The period between the contract signing and the first official day of work is the second orientation phase.[4] Once the teacher is hired, it is ideal to give him/her a copy of the school philosophy, faculty and student handbooks, or whatever handouts explain the goals and procedures of the school. It can be suggested to the teacher that questions or concerns be brought to the fall workshop.

An experienced teacher can serve as a sponsor to the new teacher, assisting him/her in a variety of ways in a one-to-one relationship. Some of the ways would in-

clude a preschool conference and a weekly conference after classes have begun. A sponsor's specific responsibilities will flow from the orientation plan and so will be unique to each school. (Some schools use other titles such as mentor or buddy to refer to the role that is described here as sponsor.)

During the summer, several activities can occur to smooth the path to the new job. The chart below describes these activities which focus on introducing the teacher to some of the major areas of school life. (The labeling and numbering of those areas coincides with the list on page 4. Areas not addressed during the preschool orientation will be dealt with during other phases.)

Suggested Activities for Preschool Orientation

Focus	Activities
2. The Teaching Position	
2.1 Job Expectations	Individual conference with the principal or sponsor to discuss the specifics of the teaching assignment. Although these specifics differ in each school, they generally would include: (a) explanation of course of study or syllabus for each subject (b) expectations for lesson planning (c) supervision plan (d) grading method
2.2 Religious Expectations	Religion curriculum explained by sponsor or principal. Also, customs for prayer, liturgical celebrations; suggestions for theology or religious education inservice.
2.3 Classroom Management	Faculty handbook will deal with this. Clarification later at workshop.
2.4 Extracurricular Assignments	Discuss the responsibilities, policies, and resources for extracurricular assignments.
2.6 Personnel Policies	Personnel policies and conditions of employment (these would have been presented during the interview). Sign W-2 forms.
3. The Community	
3.1 Information about Socio-Economic, Social, Family Background	Communicated at contract time by principal or sponsor; give related handouts
3.2 Information about the Locale	Discuss any question about housing if relocation has been necessary.
3.3 Opportunity to Meet People of the School Community	Letter of welcome from Board of Education chairperson. A welcome letter from the sponsor, preferably with an invitation for lunch or social event.

Fall Workshops

It is assumed that a school term begins with an orientation workshop for new teachers and a workshop for the total faculty. The new teacher workshop is scheduled one day before the total faculty workshop. This orientation workshop basically is a time of getting settled. The program builds upon what the teacher has already learned through the interview and preschool activities, with the content focusing largely upon the philosophy and history of the school and information about policies, procedures, and school population. These focal areas may be touched upon in a different way at the total faculty workshop.

The specific content and format of the new teacher workshop will depend upon what is suited to the needs of the new teacher and what message it seems important for the school to communicate. The workshop is an educational process, and the decisions about objectives, methods of presentation/interaction, and evaluation are similar to those a teacher makes in planning a lesson. These decisions are best made by the principal and a small orientation committee. (See Planning Process, p. 10. Suggested activities are listed in the chart on p. 6.)

The orientation of the new teacher continues during the workshop that orients the total faculty to the new school year. (This workshop is part of ongoing faculty inservice.) At this first faculty meeting, new members are not being absorbed into an existing group, but rather are participating in the formation of a new group. Persons are unique and irreplaceable. Some persons have left and other have come. What is on paper about the school may be the same, but the faculty community, even though it has a history, is different with the joining of even one new person.

The principal leads faculty members in being open to

welcoming new persons and allowing a new dynamic of relationship to occur. Such openness to embracing new persons and beginning again does not happen without conscious effort and is nurtured by the way the orientation activities are structured. (Activities which could be particularly useful to building relationships between new faculty and former faculty are suggested on the charts on pp. 5–8.)

The welcoming tone of both workshops is equally as important as the content. Meeting many new people, hearing new information, and wondering, "Will I fit in?" can be an overwhelming experience. So, hospitality – spelled out in a meal, prayer together, laughter, and gracious concern – is coupled with instruction. The principal and sponsor are sensitive to the ways assistance can be provided. The teachers learns about the community by experiencing the community. Close scrutiny of documents on the uniqueness of the school's faith community cannot replace that uniqueness lived out.[5]

A teacher's healthy self-concept is critical to the teaching task, and the workshops offer a good opportunity to enhance self-concept. The new teacher needs background to become acclimated, but needs also to be regarded as having specialized competencies, valuable ideas, questions, and suggestions which will contribute to the well-being of the school.

The following chart of Suggested Activities for the New Teacher Workshop relates to the list of "What Should Happen for the New Teacher" on pp. 3–4. Each of the three major areas, "School Goals and Structures," "The Teaching Position," and "The Community," has been touched upon in the interview and preschool stage and now is handled more in depth during the workshop. Activities listed for the total faculty include only those activities pertinent to orienting the new teacher. There is a great deal of other content that occurs in this workshop in preparing the faculty for the new year. These suggestions represent only what might be especially helpful to teachers new to the staff.

Suggested Activities for Orientation at Fall Workshops

Focus	New Teacher Workshop Activities	Total Faculty Workshop Activities
1. School Goals, Structures		
1.1 Philosophy, history of school	Brainstorm and write on butcher paper, "What I Expect a Catholic School to Be"; "Values of a Catholic School"; "Description of a Catholic School Graduate"; "Why I Want to Teach in a Catholic School."	Write a personal creed: – purpose of school – role of teacher – role of parent – role of student
	*Slide presentation by principal or teacher on philosophy and history of local school.	Select a statement from school philosophy as a goal for year. Decide on an objective for each month; this can be noted in weekly bulletin or posted.
	Discussion: Are values expressed in this school's philosophy similar to or different from those of other schools where employed?	Each person lists two strengths of the school, work alone 5–10 minutes, and then share in small group. Each group reports to the whole faculty.
1.2 Relationship to Church's educational goals	Presentation and discussion on school in Catholic tradition. Suggested references: *To Teach As Jesus Did* *Sharing the Light of Faith* *The Catholic School* *Teach Them*	Reflection/discussion: "Mission of Catholic School in Relationship to Church's Other Ministries." (See *Teach Them, To Teach As Jesus Did, Sharing the Light of Faith.*) Group of five reflect, then present combined insights to total faculty.
	Use dyads or small group: "How can these values be implemented in my classroom?"	Use exercise on values from NCEA curriculum project, *Vision and Values in the Catholic School.*
	Presentation on history of Catholic education (Appendix A) and history of local school.	Reflection/discussion on implications for educators of Church's stance on social issues. Use documents such as *Justice in the World, Brothers and Sisters to Us, U.S. Pastoral Letter on Racism in our Day, Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Handicapped People.*
	Prayer service using passages from school philosophy and *To Teach as Jesus Did*; accompany with slides/music.	

* Local school slides are worth the effort and expense; they can be used for parent meetings and presentations to parish/civic communities.

Focus	New Teacher Workshop Activities	Total Faculty Workshop Activities
1.3 Policies, procedures, unwritten customs	Flow chart of relationship of school/ teacher to diocese, diocesan education office, parish, parish education board.	Welcome by pastor and/or president of school board, with update on parish goals and role of school in fulfilling parish educational goals.
2. The Teaching Position		
2.1. Job expectations	Inspirational talk by principal on teaching: See Appendix B. Handouts for reflection/discussion: "Characteristics of a Teacher in a Catholic School," (Appendix C) NCEA, 1975, p. 6.	Welcome talk. Remember your favorite teacher. Describe the teacher's characteristics. What did you most value? Use prepared materials on teaching, e.g., Madeline Hunter (see References), to create an environment in which children learn to like themselves (Borba, 1978).
2.1-1 School curriculum	Review curriculum presented in preschool conference; opportunity for questions, discussion with sponsor; explain special programs counseling, drug/alcohol prevention, health services, and other student services. If several new teachers, divide into lower, intermediate, upper divisions to discuss curriculum and teaching methods at each level.	Update on curriculum development and involvement of faculty in year's curricular change; update on special programs. Overview of school calendar. Discuss ways that religious values permeate the curriculum and school climate.
2.1-2 Teaching resources	Tour of school with sponsor; emphasize library, supplies, janitorial/secretarial services, duplicating procedures, requisition procedures, etc. (If school is large, have coded map.)	
2.1-3 Relationship to authority and degree of autonomy in fulfiling role	Principal explains clearly his/her leadership style, ways of exercising authority, participation, initiative, with regard to creativity, feedback, communication, accountability.	Principal updates faculty on administrator/ teacher working relationships. Allow time for questions and discussion.
2.2 Religious expectations	Review faculty and student handbook section on community, Liturgy, prayer.	Presentation on Sacraments, Scripture, etc., followed by discussion of implications for religious education.
2.3 Classroom management	Review faculty handbook related to classroom management; e.g., disciplinary codes. Review policies for homeroom, family expectations, procedures for incomplete work. Review legal areas: non-discrimination, reporting child abuse, privacy act and student records, student rights/responsibilities, fire drill, emergency procedures in case of injury or illness.	Update on discipline policies. Experienced teachers describe ways of handling discipline. Role play classroom situations to assist teachers in understanding dynamics of teacher/student interaction. Use resource, *Student as Disciple Complete* (or Mini) *Kit*, NCEA.
2.4 Extracurricular assignments	Clarify extracurricular assignment and description.	Calendar of special events: teacher meeting, parent conferences, etc. Clarification of what is expected of faculty in relation to attendance responsibilities for lunch room, playground, and other prefecting tasks.

Focus	New Teacher Workshop Activities	Total Faculty Workshop Activities
2.5 Improvement of teaching	Outline plan for supervision.	Review supervision plan.
	Explain how inservice is organized and how the teachers are involved in planning.	Report from faculty inservice planning committee.
	Clarify the place of faculty meetings as distinct from or part of inservice.	
	Discuss: "What are your professional growth plans?"	
	Explain state and diocesan requirements for professional renewal.	
2.6 Personnel policies	Offer opportunity for questions about personnel policies which were given earlier to teachers in written form.	Cover any new information about personnel policies, e.g., process for gaining renewal units, new insurance, benefits, etc.
3. The Community		
3.1 Information	Present background material on socioeconomic patterns, family structure patterns, ethnic background of community. If school has under-represented groups of Native Americans, Hispanics or Blacks, in-depth background/history should be introduced and continued in inservice. (Teachers may need to become familiar with cultural anthropology, urban sociology, and American history that deal with socioeconomic roots of current conditions.)	Updating and more in-depth knowledge and sensitivity to people the school services.
3.2 Information about locale	Offer opportunity for questions. If larger city, get materials from Chamber of Commerce to distribute.	
3.3 Opportunity to meet people of the school	Teacher sponsor and some of other faculty share in sessions of new teacher workshop.	Allow time for informal and formal introductions. – Coffee and rolls and chance to mingle before session. Use nametags if group is large. Sponsor introduces new person in this informal setting. – At meeting, principal introduces new persons with personal professional background or all faculty introduce themselves.
	In case of one or two new teachers, having several others involved makes for a livelier workshop with interaction.	
	Luncheon to welcome new teacher, sponsored by school board or parents' organization.	
	Welcome by board president, student council president.	Ice-breaker: Everyone tells about his/her name. Why was the name chosen for you, nickname, what you like/dislike about name, misspellings or mispronunciations, and other stories about one's name.
	Presentation by a supervisor or coordinator from diocesan education office.	
3.4 Opportunity pray, socialize	Prayer service using passages from school philosophy and *To Teach as Jesus Did*.	Evening of retreat.
		Liturgy at close of faculty meeting.
		Dinner or wine and cheese party following liturgy.
		Prayer service focused on teacher role (Appendix D).

Ongoing

The faculty workshops are ended, the children have arrived, the school spirit is high, and the year is underway. To all appearances, the new teachers are fully part of the faculty team.

Because of the press of innumerable responsibilities, the principal may be tempted to breathe a sign of relief that orientation is completed. However, it is too early to cross "New Teacher Orientation" off the TO DO list. The whole faculty is involved in inservice and supervision; ongoing orientation includes the inservice and supervision for new teachers and builds on the enthusiasm and fervor characteristic of early days in new work.

> There is good reason to believe that teachers are best made after they are in service rather than before. Just as the golfer must learn putting on the green and the cook must master a sauce at the stove, teachers learn to teach when they are with children . . .
>
> (Sergiovanni, 1978, p. 38)

The plan for ongoing orientation depends upon what each new teacher needs to function effectively. There are many factors which enter into the teacher's growth.

> The nature of the particular student, the expectations of his/her parents, the ideology of the educational system, the work customs of the faculty, and the physical character of the building itself all exert a profound influence on the teacher's functions. It is not surprising, therefore, that these same factors have an equally profound effect on the competencies required by a teacher, as well as on the procedures for developing those competencies . . . even the experienced teacher transferring from one school to another finds it necessary to make substantial realignments in teaching style.
>
> (Sergiovanni, 1978, p. 38)

These factors were dealt with during the previous stages of orientation, but now that the teacher is actively involved in the day-to-day routine, there needs to be an opportunity to ask questions, share insights, and express special needs. The new teachers and the principal together can plan an ongoing orientation that allows for the expression of needs.

The following chart suggests activites for ongoing orientation.

Suggested Activities for Ongoing Orientation

Focus	Activities
1. School Goals and Structures	Small group of new teachers and sponsors meet two or three times first semester to discuss what seems unique about this school.
	Describe how you see the school philosophy being lived out. What are you finding most difficult in adjusting to the goals of the school? What goals are not being lived out from your experience thus far?
2. The Teaching Position	Principal (or sponsor) and new teacher have short meeting daily during first week, weekly during first month, and regular meetings periodically during first semester. (Use substitute teacher when possible to provide time for the new teacher to have conferences.)
	Inservice events planned with sensitivity to needs of new teachers. Review handbook in relation to classroom management, grading, parent conferences.
	Principal begins supervision of new teacher in accord with plan for all faculty. Supervision model should be clarified (preferably a model which involves teacher in goal-setting and self-evaluation).
	Invite new teachers to join faculty committees.
	Keep total faculty alerted to professional growth opportunities in community or diocese.
3. The Community	Discuss parent conferences, teacher/parent relationships. (Hunter, 1978) This could involve a family visitation or telephone plan.
	Keep a journal about your relationships with teachers, students, parents, and how you are feeling about your first days. What would help you?
	Celebrations of birthdays, special events for persons or for the school can be celebrated with a liturgy, prayer service, meal, after-school party. Principal and

sponsor pay special attention to continued welcoming of new person to these events until person is comfortable.

Suggested Planning Process for Orientation

Throughout this booklet, reference has been made to the importance of planning for the local situation rather than adopting someone else's plans. The presentation in the booklet has offered a way of thinking about orientation that is basic to planning. Following is a suggested planning process:

1. During teacher interviews, the principal assesses special needs of new teachers and asks, "What would be helpful to you in preparing to teach in this school?"
2. In late spring, the principal establishes (a) a committee to work on new teacher orientation and (b) a committee to work on fall faculty workshop (could be the same committee).
3. Orientation committee designs a survey to gather ideas from present teachers.
   a. What was helpful when you joined this school staff?
   b. What do you wish had been different so that your adjustment would have been easier?
   c. What do you think would be helpful to a new teacher coming into the school?
   d. What would you suggest to your committee as they plan orientation activities for the fall workshop?
4. Principal and committee meet to:
   a. Determine any special needs of new teachers
   b. Examine tabulated results of faculty survey
   c. Establish focus on each phase of orientation in light of the above data and in response to these questions:
      (1) What should happen for the school?
      (2) What should happen for the teacher? (See pages 3-4)
5. During an action plan for each phase of orientation, i.e., interview, preschool workshops, and ongoing. Following is an example:

Action Plan: Phase II, Preschool

Focus	Task	Date of Completion	Who Will Accomplish?
Meet new people in community	Welcome letter or phone call to new teacher: Mary Dobbins	8/21	Sponsor: Philip Gramley

6. Carry our the action plan.
7. Evaluate. Build a simple evaluation tool that asks each teacher what has happened for him/her as a new teacher and what could have been more helpful. Sponsor and principal respond to these questions in light of what the action plans were to have accomplished. Use results to further assist the new teacher where need for such assistance is indicated and in planning for the next year's orientation.

Conclusion

When the orientation task is completed, and the once-new teacher has forgotten what it was like to be new, it is time to place a fresh orientation plan on the drawing board. New candidates are interviewed, and the series of orientation activities begins again and once more merges into the larger plan for faculty and staff development.

Often a principal does not have the luxury of beginning at the beginning. If it is already August, and there is no committee and there is no orientation plan, the time to begin is in August, with a strategy that will best meet the needs of the new teachers for that year. If it is October, and somehow a special orientation day for new faculty members never happened, the time to begin is in October, with a program that involves the new teachers in stating their needs and suggesting ways those needs could be met. Today is always the day to begin. And today is always the day to dream and resolve that next year, interview time will mark the beginning of an orientation program that is sensitive to that crucial meeting of a new teacher and a school community.

Footnotes

1. "A fixed program of staff development appears unrealistic and invalid according to available knowledge about how adults learn. Resources must be provided, so that staff improvement becomes a developmental process which is cooperatively planned and an integral part of education." (Beegle, Edefelt, 1977: p. 65)
2. It is in the best interest of an organization to provide the newcomer with first-hand facts, with credible information about system conditions, and with other knowledge that many be required to affect his intergration into the organization. (Castetter, 1976: p. 209)
3. This assessment of needs is consistent with the staff development model of "designing learning cooperatively with the teacher to fit his/her needs, interests, and abilities. If one expects the teacher to do this for the student, then provision must be made to do the same for the growth of the teacher." (Beegle, Edefelt, 1977: p. 62)
4. "Probably at no other time during the employmnet cycle does the newly appointed staff member need more consideration, guidance, and understanding than he/she does between the day of his/her appointment and the time when he/she becomes a self-motivated, self-directed, fully effective member of the enterprise." (Castetter, 1976: p. 205)
5. "The more consciously we accept the goal of faith community independent of what is truly happening in our midst, the more elusive faith community is going to be. In other words, to achieve faith community, we have to start from where we are. Community is more an aggregate of actions taken, rather than of formulated words." (Harrington, *The Principal's Toolbox*, 1975, p. 63)

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APPENDIX A
Brief History of Catholic Schools

In the Colonial period of this country, schooling outside the home was provided primarily by religious groups, including Catholics. Catholics in the Spanish, French and English colonies played a big part in educating the young.

In the English colonies, Congregationalists settled in New England, Anglicans in the South and mixed religious denominations in the Mid-Atlantic colonies. And the schools in these areas reflected the various denominations' influence.

The early Catholic schools served a number of purposes. They educated Catholic immigrants—but others as well, including numbers of American Indians. They helped the downtrodden become productive, self-supporting citizens. But, ultimately, like all education, Catholic education sought to help its students discover the truth—an understanding of themselves and their world.

The first Catholic parish school was opened at St. Mary's Parish in Philadelphia in 1767 and formally "founded" in 1782.

At the time the Constitution was signed, there were no public schools in the country. Even after the establishment of the first public schools, early state constitutions and statutes actively encouraged public support for private and denominational schools.

But this practice ended as the idea of separation of church and state grew and as the concept of public education developed in the middle of the 19th century.

In 1841, the Catholic school system and a New York City Board of Education were developed as separate entities following disagreement over allocation of state funds. Other states also stopped funding denominational schools.

Catholic education grew steadily during the 19th century. In 1810, Mother Elizabeth Seton opened St. Joseph's Academy in Emmitsburg, Md. Her sisters later taught in schools in New York, among other places.

Baltimore had St. Patrick's Common School by 1815, before there were any public schools in that city. By 1838, there were 19 Catholic elementary schools in Baltimore.

The American Catholic leadership, brought together by a Baltimore church council in 1829, decreed that Catholic schools be established. Within 11 years, there were 200 or more Catholic schools, about half of which were located west of the Alleghenies.

In these early schools, subjects were usually reading, spelling, arithmetic, geography and history. Religion was taught as a special topic outside of regular class hours. School was held six to seven hours daily, six days a week, 10 months a year. Sometimes hours were a bit sporadic because of the weather and the seasonal requirements of farming.

In 1852, the First Plenary Council of Baltimore called for the establishment of a Catholic school in every parish.

The first diocesan Catholic high school was established in Philadelphia in 1890. At this time there were also parish-run high schools. Of 8,000 Catholic parishes in the country in 1900, 45 percent, or approximately 3,600, had elementary schools.

Between 1900 and 1920 the number of both Catholic and public schools increased, and the public schools became increasingly secular. By 1920, the number of Catholic elementary schools had increased from about 3,600 to 6,551 with 41,581 teachers and 1,759,673 students.

In 1900, there were nearly 150 Catholic high schools in the U.S. By 1920, there were 1,552.

After stormy beginnings, with conflicts over the establishment of "common," or public schools, Catholic schools were given a boost with the 1925 Supreme Court decision against the Oregon law attempting to outlaw non-public schools.

From that time until 1964, Catholic schools grew steadily. By 1960, for example, there were 4.5 million students in Catholic elementary schools across the nation and 2,392 Catholic high schools.

From 1964 to the present, Catholic school enrollment has dropped – due to a number of factors, including the rising cost of education and the declining birthrate.

Today, Catholic schools are once again stabilizing and their strengths are abounding. The quality of Catholic education is high. The future looks bright.

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APPENDIX B

Preparing an Inspirational Talk

At the beginning of the new teacher workshop, or sometime during it, you as a principal will make a welcoming presentation to the new teachers. Prior to this workshop, the teachers' relationships with you have been in one-to-one conferences or in conversations. Now, you have an opportunity to reveal a different aspect of your role as faculty leader. It is an opportunity for you to set a tone for the school year by communicating who you are and what you believe about the school. It is a time to speak from the heart.

In preparing, visualize who the new teachers are, their concerns, questions, and what they might want to know about you. You will have had to do some careful listening to answer those questions. Jot down your thoughts. Then, reflect on what you want to say to the teachers about yourself, your vision, values, how you understand the mission of the school and role of the teacher. Jot down those reflections. Then match the two lists of what you judge would meet the teachers' needs and what you want to say; prioritize the topics to cover in your talk.

Then, you might look for ideas from others, passages from books, articles, Church documents, the school's philosophy statement that would contribute to the message you wish to convey. I suggest you keep a card file with notes of readings that have inspired you and that you think would inspire others. Recall stories from your experiences in teaching and administration or stories you have heard from others – the touching ones, the funny ones that will help to make your message come alive.

Prepare an outline with brief notes that highlight major ideas of your presentation rather than preparing a script. Then, give the talk in a genuine caring way with whatever level of passion is typical for you. It is important that you be present in the words and present to the teachers to whom you are speaking. It may seem rather obvious that you be present in these ways, but it does happen that people give talks which come off as words empty of feeling and fail to build bonds of communication between the speaker and the listeners.

At the end of your presentation, give teachers an opportunity to ask questions or comment. Pose some questions for discussion about the implications of your message. New teachers may be a little hesitant to disagree, but encourage them to express their viewpoints and discuss the implications of those views.

I say all this with an awareness that your time as a principal has to be divided into many tasks. When do you have time to read, to reflect, to prepare? Yet, I strongly encourage you to take time. The results of time spent with the teachers will be felt throughout the school.

The committee sponsoring this booklet asked me to give a sample of an inspirational talk. Rather than do that, I would like to share some reflections about some steps I would go through in preparing such a talk. First, I would think about what teachers said they needed. In my experience as a principal, I noticed the need teachers had for a clearer understanding of their role as teachers in a Catholic school. This was particularly true for teachers with religious faiths other than Catholic. Even though we would have discussed that role during the interview, and even though they may have read and even discussed the school philosophy, I still heard them asking me to explain what I thought was important. Then, I would listen to what I felt a need to say; it happens that I often felt a need to say something about the role of a teacher in a Catholic school. So, the two needs matched. I will describe some of my thoughts and a resource I would use in preparing for a presentation.

I have a deep conviction about the importance of the teacher as a learner. Although the teacher is a trained professional with specific responsibilities to teach knowledge, attitudes, and skills within the framework of the school's philosophy and curriculum plan, I feel that the teacher must not dominate the scene with answers. I think of a teacher as one who inspires questions and teaches critical thinking and responsible

decision-making. If the teacher sees him/herself as someone who is still learning, he/she will be a questioner and open to the questions of others. He/she will model ways to think about questions and offer the many resources available about how others have faced questions about human life. Children will become aware that every answer opens new questions. The teacher will model that persons have to take responsibility for finding the meaning of their lives and facing the consequences of their decisions. I think that this perspective of this way of being with students is as important when working with children as with adolescents. (In a discussion, I would ask teachers to describe how a teacher who had this perspective would behave in the classroom.)

I also have a deep conviction that teachers in a religious school not only witness to their Christian beliefs, but somehow convey that they are genuine searchers for God, caught up in the mystery of their growing relationship with God. I personally feel awestruck about the tremendous responsibility for speaking of God to others. I wonder at the mystery of a child's personal relationship with God and at the many ways there are to find God. I have often grieved for the adults I know who somehow in their education came to see only one certain way of discovering God as a Catholic, and because that way did not at all fit them, they have turned away from the Church. I want to cry out to them that Catholicism allows for many ways, that there are Catholic theologians who are articulating ways that would fit their vision of life. I want to say that what they have turned away from is only one aspect of the Catholic faith, only one expression. I wonder at how they came to have such an interpretation from which they then turned. I wonder who their teachers were.

So, I want to speak to teachers about the delicate ministry that is theirs in guiding children into a mature faith. I would ask them to reflect, read widely in theology, talk to others, and above all, listen and pray about the mystery within the child, so that the child may continue growing toward his/her own mature faith and not the mature faith of the teacher.

Because I have these convictions, I was recently very struck by some passages in a book, *Christian Religious Education*, by Thoma. Groome of the Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry Department at Boston College. In fact, I was struck by the whole book. (I enthusiastically recommend it to anyone working in a Catholic school.)

In Chapter 12, "Our Students, Ourselves," Groome talks about the teacher's role with students in a way that I found very challenging. I would paraphrase some of the following passages and combine them with my own thoughts and stories if I were giving a talk to new teachers at the fall workshop.

> "Our students are brother/sister pilgrims in time with us. All of them have their own unique history (story) and destiny (vision). In presuming to be educators with them, we are taking on a sacred trust, a trust that is betrayed when we deny who they have been or decide who they should be." (p. 263)
>
> "Our students are subjects, not objects. They have an 'inalienable" right to be treated with dignity and respect because they possess their own individuality and have the capacity to respond to their own calling. There are many philosophical arguments that could be offered to substantiate this claim, but for Christian religious education legitimation can be found most readily in the Christian faith tradition itself.
>
> "Our students are to be treated as subjects, not from any particular magnanimity of ours or merit of theirs, but because all people are created in the same image and likeness of God. Our students, and we pilgrims with them, have the calling and therefore the right to grow in the likeness of our Creator. The journey of each person back to God is a sacred one, and each, in its own way, is unique. To treat our students as anything less than subjects does violence to that process. Thus they are not objects to be acted upon and molded as we decide, but subjects with whom we enter into a relationship of mutuality and equality. Christian religious education is to be a subject-to-subject relationship of co-partners.
>
> "As subjects, our students have the right to speak their own word and to name their own reality. As teachers, we have a right to speak our own word, but also an obligation to hear theirs. We can share our stories and visions with them and make present the Story and Vision of the Christian community in whose name we educate. But we must also bring them to know their own story and vision and to critically appropriate the 'knowing' of other people of faith in their pilgrimage to God." (pp. 263-264)

Groome further suggests that our students, like ourselves, are called to be and are capable of being makers of history. Through our choices, we can influence the world's future.

> "Within the context of a Christian faith formation, this means that our students can reach a Christian consciousness that causes them to engage in the world to make present the Kingdom already and prepare the material for its final completion. This is a mutual and equal responsibility of educators and students alike.
>
> "We cannot build the Kingdom by ourselves. It is always God's gift. But we are called upon to keep our side of the covenant, and this means being people who act freely to shape history toward the ongoing coming of the Kingdom. God's activity will bring about the completed kingdom . . .
>
> "The point I am making here could have far-reaching implications for how we do Christian religious education. If we could come to see our students not as people to be made into "good Catholics" or "good Baptists" or the like, in a narrow sense, but rather as people who are called upon to engage in the world for the making present of the Kingdom of God and the shaping of the present in the direction of the completed Kingdom, then imagine what the transforming consequences might be for ourselves, our church, our society, and the world.
>
> "Treating our students as subjects and makers of history could well require a major shift in consciousness for most of us educators. For one thing, it is likely that as students, we ourselves have been treated in a way that is the antithesis of what I am describing here. Since the tendency is to imitate our models, to teach we were taught, we need to look critically at our own educational biographies and at the models that most shape our practice." (pp. 264-265)

Groome says much more in this chapter, but understanding his commentary on the role of the Christian educator would require reviewing the book's development of the shared praxis approach to religious education.

At the conclusion of a presentation on the role of teachers, I would ask teachers to discuss their understanding of the student as subject and to give examples of how this perspective would be demonstrated in the classroom. I would ask them to discuss their own educational experience in relationship to what Groome suggests about the way education has been done. —K.E.

APPENDIX C

Characteristics of Teachers in Catholic Schools

prepared by

Committee on Personnel
of Supervision,
Personnel and Curriculum Section
Department of Chief Administrators,
NCEA

1. The teacher understands and accepts the fact that the schools are operated in accordance with the philosophy of Catholic education.
2. The teacher accepts and supports the on-going building and living of a Faith Community, not simply as a concept to be taught but as a reality to be lived in worship, service, and interpersonal relationships.
3. The teacher has an overall knowledge of the goals of the entire school program and can relate his specific expertise to these goals.
4. The teacher reflects in his personal and professional life a commitment to Gospel values and the Christian tradition.
5. The teacher acknowledges the responsibility for providing an atmosphere for fostering the development of a faith commitment by the students.
6. The teacher accepts the responsibility for providing an atmosphere for fostering the development of a faith commitment by the students.
7. The teacher accepts accountability in the fulfillment of his professional responsibilities.
8. The teacher accepts professional evaluation of his performance.
9. The teacher demonstrates good classroom management and record-keeping techniques.
10. The teacher provides for continuous professional growth by engaging in advanced studies, attending workshops and inservice programs, reading current professional journals and adapting to improved teaching ideas, methods and materials.
11. The teacher recognizes and appreciates the contributions of the other members of the professional staff, and shares with them his ideas, abilities and materials.
12. The teacher understands the limits of his professional competencies and makes appropriate referrals for the benefit of the student.
13. The teacher recognizes and respects the primary role of the parents in the education of their children.
14. The teacher relates to the students in an adult Christian manner and contributes to the student's sense of self-worth as a Christian person.
15. The teacher shows an understanding of the principles of human growth and development.
16. The teacher is creative and resourceful in choosing instructional materials and in using appropriate school and community resources to facilitate optimum learning for all students.
17. The teacher fosters the apostolic consciousness of students by encouraging them to join in experiential learning activities that give witness to Christian justice and love.
18. The teacher motivates and guides the students in acquiring skills, virtues and habits of heart and mind required to address with Christian insight the multiple problems of injustice which face individuals and our pluralistic society.
19. The teacher demonstrates the use of skillfull questions that lead pupils to analyze, synthesize, and think critically.
20. The teacher provides learning experiences with enable students to transfer principles and generalizations developed in school to situations outside of the school.
21. The teacher provides for on-going evaluation of students and the learning program in order to modify the learning process in accord with each student's needs, interests and learning patterns.

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APPENDIX D
Suggested Prayer Forms

Song of Praise at Opening of Faculty Workshop

Glory to You, God our Father,
for you are a God whom we can praise
and to whom we bring our love.

We thank You for all that we have received;
for earth and sky and the seasons of the year,
for seas and lakes and rivers and all living creatures
for people in our lives, our families,
for the friends You have blessed us with,
all those who have touched our lives
particularly for Your Son, our Lord,
Who emptied Himself because He loves us.

Lord Jesus, glory to You,
Lord of our human life, become poor for our sakes
Lord of our sorrow; Lord of our joy,
Lord of our life, our death and rising.

We thank You for being who You are,
and we thank You because You did not hold back
but gave Yourself for us.

We thank You for remaining with us
through the power of Your Holy Spirit
whom with the Father, You have sent.

May we further Your glory by reaching beyond ourselves
to bring Your kingdom into many lives.

And may our spreading of that Kingdom
be our effective song of thanks and praise. Amen.

Sister Katherine McLaughlin, C.S.J.
College of St. Catherine

Prayer Service

Call to Prayer:

Leader: We come together today to think about, talk about, and work on teaching. Before engaging in our tasks with one another, let us take time to remind ourselves of the God who is also present with us, the God who loves us and the students we teach, the God who called and continues to call us each day to be teachers.

All: We begin our prayer in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

First Reading:

School is not easy and it is not for the most part fun, but then, if you are lucky, you may find a teacher. Three real teachers in a lifetime is the very best of luck. I have come to believe a great teacher is a great artist and that there are as few as there are any other great artist. Teaching might be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit. My three had these things in common. They all loved what they were doing. They did not tell – they catalyzed a burning desire to know. Under their influence, the horizons spring wide and fear went away and the unknown became knowable. But most important of all, the TRUTH, that dangerous stuff, became beautiful and very precious. *– John Steinbeck*

Pause: Take time to recall your good teachers and the many things about them for which you are grateful.

All: Let us pray: God, our Father, we praise you and thank you for the people who have taught us, the people who revealed and continue to reveal your world and your love to us.

Second Reading:

The achievement of the specific aim of the Catholic school depends not so much on subject matter or methodology as on the people who work there. The extent to which the Christian message is transmitted through education depends to a very great extent on the teachers. The integration of faith and life in the person of the teacher mediates the integration of culture and faith for the students *– The Catholic School*

Pause: Take time to recall the ways God's call to teach comes to you.

All: Let us pray: God, our Father, we praise and thank you for calling us to share your world and your love with others. Help us to be faithful to your call. Help us to help one another be clear and effective witnesses of your presence and love at (name of school).

Third Reading (and prayer for each other):

Out of His infinite glory, may He Give you the power through His Spirit for your hidden selves to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; until knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God.

Glory to Him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to Him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. *– Ephesians 3:16-21*

Response: Glory and Praise to our God.

Schutte, *Song of the Saint Louis Jesuits*,
North American Liturgy Resources, 1977)

A Reading and Response:

As the scripture says, "Everyone who calls out to the Lord for help will be saved." But how can they call to Him for help if they have not believed? And how can they believe if they have not heard the message? And how can they hear if the message is not proclaimed? And how can the message be proclaimed if the messengers are not sent out? As the scripture says, "How wonderful is the coming of the messengers who bring good news." But not all have accepted the Good News. Isaiah himself said, "Lord, who has believed our message?" So then, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through preaching Christ. *– Romans 10:3-17*

Prayer: Creator, Father, our God, we humbly accept the challenge of being Your message bearers. We share life with Your Son and we preach Your Son. We rejoice in the Good News and pray for the courage to tell it to others – students in our school, their parents, and the community in which we live. We are grateful for all that You have given us and ask for strength to keep our commitments. We ask this through you Son, in the unity of the Spirit. Amen.